AMERICAN MUSEUM NOVITATES

Number 586 — Published by THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY New York City — Nov. 16, 1932

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A NEW GENUS OF RODENTS FROM YUCATAN

BY H. E. ANTHONY

In a collection of mammals made by Mr. Robert T. Hatt and his wife in Yucatan, the fall of 1929, are two specimens of an apparently undescribed genus of rodents quite similar to *Nyctomys*. Mr. Hatt, an assistant curator in the department of mammals of the American Museum, was engaged in searching through the cave and grotto deposits for fossil remains which might link up with the palæontology of the West Indies, and his work was supported by a grant from the Angelo Heilprin Fund. The collecting of recent mammals was incidental to the search for fossil specimens, and the capture of a type for a new genus was an unexpected development, for the existing mammalian genera of Yucatan were thought to be well known. It gives me pleasure to associate with this discovery the name of the collector, for whom I have named the species.

OTONYCTOMYS, new genus (Cricetidæ)

GENERAL CHARACTERS.—A medium-sized mouse very similar to *Nyctomys*, to which it is closely related, but differing in very much larger auditory bullæ. External ear about as in *Nyctomys*, tail heavily haired, hind foot broad but tarsus not as broad as in *Nyctomys*. Molar dentition weaker, anterior margin of zygomatic plate approximately perpendicular to palatal plane. Mammæ: thoracic, 0; abdominal, 0; inguinal, 2; =4.

GENOTYPE.—*Otonyctomys hatti*, new species.

Otonyctomys hatti, new species

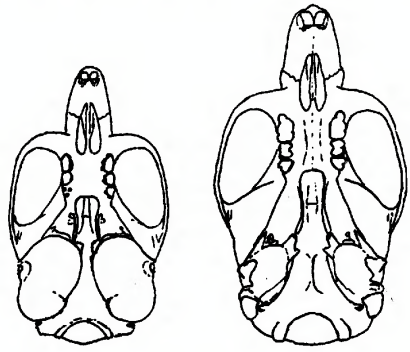
TYPE.—No. 91190, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico; October 26, 1929; collector, Robert T. Hatt. The type is a skin, skull, and trunk skeleton. The skin lacks most of the tail.

GENERAL CHARACTERS.—A bright-colored mouse differing in no very noticeable external characters, except color, from the known species of *Nyctomys*. The pronounced russet tone of coloration marks it as the handsomest of the neotropical climbing mice, for none of the *Nyctomys* are as showy. The greatly enlarged bullæ, roughly three times the size of those in *Nyctomys*, are the most obvious character of separation from its relatives in that genus.

DESCRIPTION.—Color above, nearly uniform russet to hazel (color nomenclature that of Ridgway), darkest on back; sides tawny to ochraceous tawny; a blackish spot at base of whiskers and at anterior margin of eye; upper side of hands whitish

washed with warm buff, upper side of feet whitish, metapodials darkened with ochraceous-tawny; pelage of upper parts blackish slate at base; underparts white from base to tip of hair, with suffusion of cream-buff; tail heavily covered with hairs which increase in length from base of tail to tip, 6 mm. long about midway, 16 mm. in length at end of tail, bone-brown in color both above and below; ears of medium size, well furred basally but practically naked otherwise.

Skull in most characters closely paralleling that of *Nyctomys;* rostrum moderately abbreviated; supraorbital beading well developed and continuing practically clear across parietal, across frontal and anterior half of parietal forming a noticeable shelf; zygomatic arch compressed rather than flaring, anterior margin of zygomatic plate with straight margin perpendicular to palatal plane; incisive foramina of moderate size, failing to reach anterior plane of first molar tooth by about half a



a *b*

Fig. 1. *a, Otonyctomys hatti* (A. M. N. H. No. 91190) and *b, Nyctomys sumicrasti salvini* (A. M. N. H. No. 74214).

millimeter; postpalatal notch reaching about midway of last molar tooth; auditory bullæ disproportionally large and occupying most of the basicranial region, almost meeting medially and inflated considerably beyond the ventral plane of hamular process of the pterygoid with which they approximate contact; molars rather weak, noticeably smaller than in *Nyctomys;* mandible slender, with very low coronoid process, weak ascending ramus and very shallow masseteric fossa.

MEASUREMENTS.—Taken in the flesh (measurements in parentheses are of paratype): total length, 136+(231); length of head and body, 116 (104); tail vertebræ, 20+(127); hind foot (c.u.), 21 (23); height of ear from notch, 14 (14).

Skull (measurements in parentheses are for a *Nyctomys sumicrasti salvini,* No. 74208, ♀, from Panajachel, Guatemala): greatest length, 29.5 (31.5); condylo-incisive length, 26.7 (29.4); length of nasals, 9.3 (9.8); zygomatic breadth, 15.7 (16.8); interorbital breadth, 5.5 (5.7); breadth of braincase, 13.3 (14.5); dimensions of audital bulla, greatest length, 8.9×greatest breadth, 7.0 (4.8×4.9); length of upper molar series, 4.2 (5.2); transverse breadth of second upper molar, 1.1 (1.5); greatest length of mandible, 17.7(20.7); length of lower molar series, 4.1 (5.2).

This new genus has obvious affinities with *Nyctomys* but seems to be sufficiently differentiated to warrant a separation of generic magnitude.

The great difference in size of the auditory bullæ in the two genera is not foreshadowed in any way by the bullæ of the known species of *Nyctomys*, for these are consistently comparable and the size differences are scarcely, if at all, discernible to the eye.

Superficially, *Otonyctomys hatti* is much redder than any species of *Nyctomys*, but since the color patterns are identical, except for hue, in the two genera, this difference can have little significance. The two specimens of *O. hatti* display a slight degree of color variation, the type being a shade or two lighter (with more yellow) than the paratype. Unfortunately, neither of these two specimens is perfect, one having a broken skull, the other lacking most of its tail. Because of the great importance of the skull characters, in establishing the new genus the choice of a type specimen fell logically upon the tailless individual with a sound skull.

The two specimens were caught on successive nights in a trap set in a thatched hut, on the shelf formed where the rafters meet the top of the wall. This animal is apparently a climber, as its hind foot would indicate, and doubtless has habits similar to those of *Nyctomys*, *Rhipidomys*, and *Œcomys*. Arboreal habits probably account for the comparative rarity in museum collections of such genera as *Nyctomys*, and even in regions as well known, zoölogically, as our Pacific Northwest, the tree-living *Phenacomys longicaudus* has been captured by very few collectors. *Otonyctomys* may not be an uncommon rodent in Yucatan, and the lateness of its discovery is doubtless due to the fact that the special habitat of this creature has not been thoroughly explored.